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Communist China's Military Doctrines

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Communist China's Military Doctrines

by
Ralph L. Powell



RESEARCH ANALYSIS CORPORATION

MCLEAN, VIRGINIA

FOREWORD

The military doctrines of Communist China constitute an important aspect of Chinese military affairs. They are meant to support and to advance the national security objectives of the Chinese Communist regime. The doctrines are also meant to provide guidance regarding military policies to China's military and civil officials. Hence Dr. Powell's carefully documented analysis of Peking's recorded military doctrines can also provide others with valuable insights regarding Communist China's national security policy now and in the coming decade.

Military doctrine is an area of Chinese military affairs where extensive research data are available. The sources are largely official and are sufficiently varied that concepts and techniques can be cross-checked. A principal contribution of the specialist lies in selecting basic elements of doctrine from reams of propagandistic statements, phrased in Marxian semantics.

This paper is part of a larger study on the Strategic Analysis of Communist China, directed by Dr. Ralph L. Powell.

John P. Hardt
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SUMMARY

Problem

The problem is to provide a compact, documented presentation and analysis of the principal military doctrines of Communist China and to contribute to a broader "Strategic Analysis of Communist China."

Discussion

Communist China has produced several military doctrines developed to support its basic national and foreign policy objectives. Two of these doctrines, one related to national defense and the other to revolutionary warfare, have been spelled out in detail by official Chinese publications and are based on many years of Chinese Communist military experience. They are authoritative. Peking has not yet produced a full-fledged nuclear doctrine, but it has issued significant statements regarding nuclear weapons and nuclear war. Despite her ambitions, Peking has not published a doctrine regarding conventional warfare beyond her frontiers, for to do so would contradict her claim that by definition a communist state cannot engage in aggressive wars.

Utilization of Doctrine

The defense doctrine is meant to provide authoritative guidance to the Chinese military establishment and to civilian officials regarding principles, strategy, and techniques for the defense of the mainland against a spectrum of attacks. Maoist doctrine for revolutionary warfare is meant to provide encouragement and guidance to revolutionaries and potential revolutionaries in all of the underdeveloped areas of the world, including South Vietnam. Except for several important concepts the partially developed nuclear doctrine now provides more specific guidance for official propagandists and political officers of the armed forces than for military commanders. Finally, Communist China's military doctrines have an important influence on China's force levels and force structure.

Mao's Influence on Doctrine

All official Chinese military doctrines are deeply influenced by the politico-military and military concepts of Mao Tse-tung. This is particularly true of the defense and revolutionary doctrines, both of which incorporate his major views. They both demonstrate Mao's almost mystical belief in the capabilities of the mobilized and indoctrinated masses; his emphasis on the political objectives of warfare; his belief that man, not weapons, is the decisive factor in war; and his view that victory over a technologically superior enemy can be

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gained in a protracted war of attrition and annihilation, where human will and perseverance will be major factors. The cultural revolution has not changed Mao's views or ended his influence on military doctrine.

Defense Doctrine

Given China's current lack of a nuclear deterrent, the defense doctrine seeks to provide the best possible conventional and guerrilla defense against a spectrum of possible attacks. Peking claims that China cannot be defeated by thermonuclear strikes, even if accompanied by bacteriological and chemical warfare, and that a massive invasion of China would be necessary. The doctrine calls for a defense in depth based on vast terrain, a massive population, and economic dispersal. Space will be traded for time. An invasion "would be defeated by a people's war" fought by large regular forces and an immense militia. They would combine mobile and guerrilla warfare to destroy enemy forces unit by unit.

Maoist Doctrine for Revolutionary Warfare

A fundamental purpose of the doctrine of insurrectionary warfare is to provide the principles, strategy, and tactics necessary to permit originally inferior revolutionary forces ultimately to defeat larger and better-equipped forces. The objective is the seizure and maintenance of political power. The basic concept calls for a protracted war of attrition and annihilation. But this is no longer a Marxian proletarian revolution; this is a theory of agrarian, peasant revolution, led by a Chinese-type communist party. The doctrine calls for using rural revolutionary bases to encircle and capture urban strongholds. It demands the employment of sound guerrilla and conventional warfare tactics.

Peking maintains that the doctrine is timeless and that it provides a model for revolutions in all of the underdeveloped areas of the world. The concept of using rural bases to encircle and capture cities has now been extended to a global scale. It is claimed that revolutionary Asia, Africa, and Latin America will encircle and conquer urbanized North America and Western Europe. Although Peking claims a proletarian duty to aid revolutions, an important recent modification of this doctrine provides an ideological rationalization for China's not intervening militarily to support foreign "people's wars." Peking promises aid, not troops.

The Emerging Nuclear Doctrine

Communist China still deprecates the power of nuclear weapons and claims they cannot change the nature of war. Peking refuses to admit that a thermonuclear holocaust could destroy communist as well as capitalist societies. Still the Chinese Communists do not fundamentally underestimate the effects of nuclear weapons; they do not seek a thermonuclear war, nor do they consider such a war to be inevitable. They admit that nuclear arms will have a

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great political and military effect and that they will have a deep influence on the strategy, tactics, and organization for war.

Peking's leaders argue that atomic weapons cannot be used in insurrectionary wars and have some doubts that nuclear weapons will again be used in any war. Yet Communist China places the highest priority on the development of a nuclear capability and plans to equip its forces with nuclear weapons. Peking's self-serving "disarmament" suggestions are opposed to conventional disarmament, control, and inspection. The leadership is not opposed to atomic proliferation, yet Communist China claims that its ultimate objective is the total abolition of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament without conventional disarmament would serve China's interests. As in Communist China's other doctrines Maoism, propaganda, and internal morale factors play important roles.

Findings

Communist China's defense doctrine is based on the premise that in case of war either the US would be forced to undertake a major invasion and occupation of mainland China, or Communist China could not be defeated. China's dominant leaders also claim and may believe that if US forces did invade, they would be bogged down and finally defeated by a protracted defense in depth.

Peking's leaders maintain that the Maoist doctrine of insurrectionary warfare provides an effective model for revolutions in all of the underdeveloped areas of the world. Also the promotion of "people's war" constitutes a principal means by which Peking seeks to extend its influence abroad and to achieve world power status. Furthermore Peking's leaders claim that "people's wars" are the "best weapon" against the US, and they strive to confront the US with multiple, concurrent revolts and revolutions.

Despite their propaganda the leaders of Communist China do not fundamentally underestimate the terrible effects of nuclear weapons, nor do they rashly seek to create a thermonuclear war. The Chinese appear convinced that atomic arms will not be used in insurrectionary wars, for example in Vietnam, but their defense doctrine and their nuclear concepts indicate that they do worry that nuclear weapons would be employed against China if they intervened militarily in the war in Vietnam.

Communist China's military doctrines and views on war are subordinate, not basic, factors involved in Peking's decisions regarding possible military intervention in Vietnam. Insofar as they influence such decisions they encourage prudence and nonintervention.

Despite elements of propaganda and of Maoist dogma, the military doctrines of Communist China are fundamentally realistic and well tailored to China's strengths and weaknesses. Until Communist China develops a credible nuclear deterrent, very modern conventional weapons, and greater strategic mobility, it is apt to preserve its military doctrines and force structures largely unchanged, even after Mao's death.

Communist China's Military Doctrines

ABBREVIATIONS

CPR
ECMM

Chinese People's Republic
Excerpts from China Mainland Magazines
(now Selections from . . .)
New China News Agency
Selections from China Mainland Magazines
Survey of the China Mainland Press

NCNA
SCMM
SCMP

INTRODUCTION

The military policy and doctrines of any state constitute an integral part of its overall foreign policy; they are derived in large measure from national security objectives and are designed as a guide to help in achieving those objectives. Furthermore in Communist China political ideology and military doctrine are closely intertwined. Therefore, before beginning an analysis of the principles, policies, techniques, and procedures which constitute Communist China's recorded military doctrines, it is advantageous briefly to discuss Peking's basic national and foreign policy aims. The dominant leaders of Communist China are both communists and Chinese, and it is apparent from their statements and foreign policy actions that they are influenced by tradition, ideology, national interests, and their own revolutionary experience.

In view of their statements and actions the primary national objectives of the Chinese Communist regime appear to be the following. First, they seek to transform China as rapidly as possible into a great industrial and military power with a Chinese Communist political and economic system. However, to achieve this objective they must be able to preserve the integrity and security of their regime and state. Second, the Chinese leaders seek to dominate Asia, as the Chinese Empire in past periods of great strength tended to dominate much of Asia; yet it is apparent that this objective can be achieved only at the expense of the independent countries of Asia and of the interests and commitments of the US. Third, they seek to export their version of communist ideology and to expand the world communist movement. The leaders of Communist China are still first-generation revolutionaries and they sincerely seek to promote and support revolutions, or what they call "wars of liberation" and "people's wars." However, Western colonialism has largely ended and at the present time communist revolutions in most areas can be carried out only at the expense of the independent nationalist leaders of the underdeveloped states. Fourth, Peking seeks the leadership of the world communist movement, particularly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, but this objective can only be achieved at the expense of the aims and pretensions of the USSR.

Since the Korean War the actual foreign policy actions of Communist China have usually been more cautious than her vitriolic propaganda would indicate, and there is an element of prudence in her actions. This note of prudence is also reflected in Maoist military doctrine. Although the Chinese Communists challenge the leadership roles and the national interests of both of the superpowers, the US and the USSR—a provocative and risky policy for China to adopt—China has thus far avoided a direct military confrontation. Nevertheless Peking's great ambitions, her current military potential, and her efforts

rapidly to develop a credible nuclear capability provide a threat to her neighbors and to the peace of the world.

Until the late spring of 1965, Communist China appeared to be making very considerable progress in the implementation of her major foreign-policy objectives. She seemed to have the advantage in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Her influence was increasing in the underdeveloped areas of the world and the Vietnam war was developing in her favor. The Chinese leaders spoke with increasing confidence. Then Peking began to suffer a series of major foreign-policy reverses. These setbacks were due to Peking's aggressive revolutionary policies, to detrimental events beyond China's control, and to counteractions on the part of her opponents, including both the US and the USSR.

China's relations with Algeria, Cuba, Ghana, Kenya, and the UAR have deteriorated. Three African states have broken relations with Peking. The India-Pakistan conflict of 1965 did not develop in accordance with China's aims. Also Peking finally felt compelled to help scuttle the Afro-Asian conference, in which she had earlier placed high hopes. The new leaders of the USSR have turned the tide against China in the Sino-Soviet conflict. The US changed the nature and trend of the Vietnam war by sending in powerful combat forces and by bombing military targets in North Vietnam. In Indonesia, Communist China suffered a major reverse when the large pro-Peking communist party was largely decimated. In 1966 the trend in voting in the General Assembly of the UN turned against seating Peking after Communist China had obtained a tie vote in 1965. Now Peking is accusing the US, the USSR, Japan, and India of collusion in the encirclement of China. The excesses of the "cultural revolution" and the rampages of Red Guards have further tarnished Communist China's international image. During 1966 the Chinese were so deeply involved in their internal conflicts that the cultural revolution had little noticeable effect on Peking's foreign policy, but it intensified the Maoist aspects of military doctrines. Also, deteriorating relations with the USSR became an internal issue and part of the domestic "revolution." In 1967 Communist China's growing xenophobia and antagonistic policies alienated more and more states, both communist and non-communist. Mainland China became increasingly isolated.

Communist China has produced several military doctrines to support its basic national and foreign-policy objectives. Two of these doctrines, one related to national defense and the other to revolutionary warfare, have been spelled out in detail by official Chinese publications and are based on many years of Chinese Communist military experience. They are authoritative. Peking has not yet produced a full-fledged nuclear doctrine, but it has issued significant statements regarding nuclear weapons and nuclear war. Despite her ambitions, Peking has not published a doctrine regarding conventional warfare beyond her frontiers, for to do so would contradict her claim that by definition a communist state cannot engage in aggressive wars.

The defense doctrine is meant to provide authoritative guidance to the Chinese military establishment and to civilian officials regarding principles, strategy, and techniques for the defense of the mainland against a spectrum of attacks. Maoist doctrine for revolutionary warfare is meant to provide encouragement and guidance to revolutionaries and potential revolutionaries in all of the underdeveloped areas of the world. Except for several general concepts the partially developed nuclear doctrine now provides more guidance for

official propagandists and political officers of the armed forces than for military commanders.

The above considerations provide a background for a delineation of Communist China's military doctrines. In turn an analysis of China's recorded military doctrines will contribute to an overall strategic analysis of Communist China. A famous Chinese military maxim states: "Chih-pi chih-chi; pai-chan pai-sheng" (Know the enemy, know yourself; and in a hundred battles you will win a hundred victories).

DEFENSE DOCTRINE

In an attempt to implement their objectives the leaders of Communist China have developed several military doctrines and supporting strategies. Some individuals have maintained that Communist China's military doctrine is basically defensive. Actually Peking, like other states, maintains several sub-doctrines. Only one of these is defensive and that is the doctrine for the defense of China against a possible attack on the mainland.¹ All nations maintain a doctrine aimed at defending their homeland and Communist China is no exception.

This Chinese defense doctrine represents an attempt to provide the best available conventional and revolutionary defense against a spectrum of possible attacks. It also represents the application to national defense of the military thought of Mao Tse-tung. All official Chinese military doctrines are deeply influenced by the politico-military and military concepts of Mao. This is particularly true of defense doctrine and of the principles of revolutionary warfare. Both of these doctrines incorporate Mao's major concepts. They both demonstrate his almost mystical belief in the capabilities of the mobilized and indoctrinated masses; his strong emphasis on the political objectives of warfare; his belief that man, not weapons, is the decisive factor in war, and his view that victory over a technologically superior enemy can be gained in a protracted war of attrition and annihilation, where human will and perseverance will be major factors.*

In the defense doctrine the principal type of attack on mainland China that is now foreseen as a possibility by Peking is a sudden attack by long-range nuclear strikes, combined with a massive invasion that employs both atomic and conventional weapons. Lesser threats are seen to include an invasion that utilizes conventional arms far superior to those possessed by the Chinese armed services. It is viewed as increasingly likely that war under modern conditions will include a sudden attack and conflict in "three dimensions." In case of a large-scale attack, the enemy would certainly seek to "destroy at one stroke" the "military strength, economic centers and communications hubs" of China by sudden attacks. The objective would be to destroy China's "ability to resist." Inevitably the war would be fought on an "extensive front and in great depth." Battles would take place on the land, in the air, and at sea. Rear areas might be attacked first.²

The doctrine was outlined in its most authoritative form in the originally secret Kung-tso T'ung-hsun (Bulletin of Activities) papers in 1960-1961. But greater emphasis and elucidation have been given to this defense doctrine in

* The research for this study was completed in April 1967. Since July, official promotion and glorification of Maoist military doctrines has actually been intensified. The "cultural revolution" has not modified Mao's views on war, or decreased his influence on official military doctrines. However, since August a campaign has charged that the opposition leaders Marshal P'eng Te-huai and General Lo Jui-ch'ing, as well as such political leaders as Liu Shao-ch'i and T'ao Chu, have long opposed the military "line" and views of Mao Tse-tung. It is claimed that they support a "bourgeois, purely military line." In spite of his removal from power in 1965, some statements on military doctrine of Lo Jui-Ch'ing have continuing validity. As Chief of Staff he spoke officially for the military establishment. Therefore, as his views continued valid for the office he held, they are worth noting.

recent years, especially since Peking began its own atomic testing and as a result of the intensification of the insurrection in Vietnam. The continuing development of this defense doctrine has been motivated by three basic factors. First has been the growth of the Sino-Soviet dispute and the decreasing ability or willingness of the "Chinese People's Republic" (CPR) to rely on the USSR for the ultimate defense of China. Second has been the gradual escalation of the war in Vietnam and the resulting increase in the possibility of a major war with the US. The third factor is the growing deification of Mao Tse-tung and his thought. Ever since the beginning of the "Great Leap Forward" in 1958, there has been an increasingly heavy reemphasis on the military concepts of Mao and on claims regarding their continuing diversified applicability. The military concepts and strategy of Mao—developed in the 1930's and early 1940's—have come to play an increasingly dominant role in guiding Chinese military planning even in this nuclear era.

Peking now maintains that the world situation increases the need for defense planning. It is stated that the US has shifted the focus of its global strategy from Europe to the Far East. This is demonstrated by a reallocation of the "preponderant weight" of US forces and by the escalation of the war in Vietnam. Official journals charge that, with the connivance of the "Soviet revisionists," the US is concentrating its strength against the "peoples" of Indochina and China. It is further claimed that the US, the USSR, Japan, and India have formed an "unholy alliance" against China and seek to establish a cordon around her.³

In Communist China's defense doctrine, emphasis is placed on the danger of a sudden attack by weapons of mass destruction. The enemy's use of both nuclear and conventional arms is envisaged and accounted for in the defense doctrine. It is stated that the anticipation of the enemy's use of more powerful weapons requires the maintenance of the highest vigilance, strengthening of national defenses, and adequate preparations against various scales of possible warfare. The greatest priority, however, is given to the political and ideological preparation of the people, even over military preparations;⁴ for this reason the doctrine stresses political indoctrination and seeks to exploit nationalism and other motivating forces, promoting also hatred of the US Government and of the leaders of the USSR.⁵

It is claimed in Chinese military doctrine that there are two basic and unchanging factors in wars of any type. These factors are the dominance of men and politics. With the expanded deification of Mao and the increasing influence of "Marshal" Lin Piao these concepts have been given even greater emphasis in recent years. Originally "politics" represented Mao's great faith in the capabilities of the mobilized and indoctrinated masses. It also meant the alleged superiority of the communist political and economic system as a basis for a war effort; the heavy indoctrination of the armed forces; and the Maoist principle that "the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party."⁶ During 1966 and 1967 events of the cultural revolution indicated that "politics in command" now also means primarily loyalty to and application of the thought of Mao and of his "close comrade-in-arms," Lin Piao. The obsequious veneration of Maoism and Mao's military doctrines has gone so far that his disciple "Marshal" Lin has claimed that "the best weapon" is not artillery, tanks, planes, or even atomic bombs; it is the "thought of Mao Tse-tung."⁷

The concept of the dominance of man represents the priority given to politically motivated men over all weapons, including nuclear arms. It is admitted that industries, modern weapons, and good equipment are important, but man must master technology, build weapons systems, and handle arms in combat. Also it is maintained that wars are finally won only by politically conscious and courageous men who are "not afraid of death."⁹ Hence the Maoists argue that expertness in military techniques is not enough; political consciousness is more important.⁹ They claim that Communist China's "superiority in men and politics" constitutes a "moral atomic bomb" that is more powerful and more useful than material nuclear weapons. It is a weapon "which no enemy can defeat."¹⁰ In addition the Maoists state that the possession of the spiritual or moral atomic bomb, added to China's new material nuclear weapons, provides greater confidence in China's ability to completely smash US "aggression" and defeat an invasion. They maintain that air power, sea power, and nuclear weapons are "paper tigers" that do not intimidate the Chinese, for the Chinese people and the armed forces have long made every preparation and "stand ready in battle array."¹¹ This combat readiness, it is stressed, is not only a current need but also a long-range strategic task.¹²

The defense plans against a possible atomic attack visualize a defense in depth based on China's vast terrain, her massive population, and the dispersal of her industries. Stress is also placed on self-preservation and the maintenance of recuperative powers.¹³ As early as 1961 plans called for improved air defenses, including an extensive radar screen, antiaircraft weapons, and fighter defenses. They also called for improved communications and defensive works, as well as the dispersal, camouflaging, and hardening of military installations.

The Chinese leaders maintain that China cannot be defeated by long-range nuclear strikes, even when combined with bacteriological and chemical warfare against China's inadequate crops. It is argued that to defeat China an invasion of the area by ground forces would have to follow. This invasion would be bitterly opposed and "defeated" by a Maoist "people's war"—a protracted, broken-back war supported by "aroused masses" of people and fought by the large regular forces, local forces, and a massive militia developed under the concept "everyone a soldier." These forces would combine mobile conventional war with guerrilla warfare.¹⁴ In recent years statements regarding the effectiveness of "people's war" have become grossly exaggerated. It is claimed that mobilizing all of the people as soldiers would result in making every factory, school, and collective farm a combat unit. In case of attack every mountain, forest, ditch, and house would become a stronghold, and the enemy would be attacked from all sides.¹⁵ The strategy is apparent even though the wording is verbose.

The doctrine calls not only for a strategy of active defense in depth but also for a policy of trading space for time. The enemy is to be "bogged down in endless battles" and "drowned in a hostile human sea." Increasing emphasis is placed on close combat and night fighting. It is held that in such combat "modern long-range weapons, including atomic bombs, will be helpless and ineffective."¹⁶ Furthermore, unusual stress is placed on bravery and on the "glorious" benefits of "daring to fight with bayonets." The infantry is still the Queen of Battle and nuclear weapons cannot replace "a decisive battle by ground

forces.¹⁷ In part the emphasis on training for close combat and night fighting is based on the desire to close with the enemy and negate his superiority in weapons. But it is also related to the concept of the superiority of men and politics, and finally it seeks to preserve the morale of the armed forces in the face of enemies equipped with superior weapons, including nuclear weapons.

The defense doctrine states that superior forces will be concentrated to destroy the enemy one by one, unit by unit, while the Chinese forces will simultaneously gather strength during the war. It is maintained that the enemy will be compelled to switch from a strategic offense to a strategic defense and will thereby lose the initiative; the Chinese, it is said, will then turn from the defense to a strategic offensive—a counterattack, and finally a strategic pursuit. The object is to destroy the enemy in his nest. The US is "warned" that if it attacks it will be counterattacked.¹⁸ It is officially maintained that once war begins "it will have no boundaries"; that it is wishful thinking for US planners to assume that they could rely on air and naval superiority while avoiding a ground war; and that once committed in China the US would be unable to withdraw, no matter how many troops it committed or "whatever weapons it may use, nuclear weapons included."¹⁹ The doctrine does not state how Communist China could now strike the US. However, the threat that if China were attacked the war would have no boundaries appears to indicate that Chinese forces would counterattack against US forces and bases in Southeast Asia and on the Far Eastern island chain. The validity of the whole defense doctrine is based on the assumption that after initial long-range nuclear strikes, the US would invade China with land forces in case of war. Peking claims that this "people's war" defensive doctrine can ensure the defeat of either a conventional or a nuclear attack by the US. In support of this claim, Chinese military leaders have dared US land forces to invade China in the event of war.²⁰ Since China's navy is weak her air force largely obsolescent, and her nuclear-weapons program not fully developed, the Chinese still hope that in the event of war they can successfully employ their strong suit; that is, their massive army and their even larger militia.

In this thermonuclear era, Communist China's defense doctrine is of dubious validity. In fact the Bulletin of Activities papers and more recent Chinese publications indicate that not all senior officers of the armed forces have faith in the doctrine. Actually the concept of a "people's war" defense indicates the predominant influence of Mao's military thought, but Peking also retains this defensive plan out of necessity. China still has no real nuclear deterrent. Hence its leaders have no alternative but to develop the best possible conventional and revolutionary defense against a possible nuclear attack. The leadership hopes that the announced determination to fight a protracted "people's war" will serve as a deterrent by convincing their enemies that an attempt to conquer China would be too costly. Some of the older Chinese leaders may possibly believe that their regime could survive a thermonuclear holocaust and fight a broken-back war, especially if both the US and the USSR were involved and were each other's primary targets. However, a fundamental factor underlying the defense plans is psychological. The doctrine is used to help maintain the morale of the Chinese people and the armed forces in the face of potential enemies who possess far superior weapons systems.

Peking has published almost nothing regarding conventional offensive operations beyond her frontiers. This is not surprising since to do so would not be in keeping with its foreign-policy "lines," which maintain, by definition, that a communist state cannot be aggressive. In the past the Chinese Communists maintained that their forces would be used abroad only in a counterattack, but they have also claimed that their military operations against India in 1962 were counterattacks. They have also said that they will not send their armed forces beyond their frontiers to support revolutions or "wars of liberation."²¹ Yet, several times between March and August 1965, Peking did threaten to send "men" or "volunteers" to Vietnam if "needed" or if "requested." In each case there was some hedging, and similar serious threats have not been observed since August 1965.²² This was just before "Marshal" Lin Piao published his important treatise on "people's war," which presented an official ideological rationalization for not massively intervening in foreign insurrections. There remains one interesting point regarding conventional war, namely that Peking does not emphasize the destruction of the enemy's economic capability to wage war. In the case of a war against a major power Communist China still has little capability in this regard. (For example, China could not now effectively strike the industrial heartland of the US, the USSR, or Western Europe.) As a result the Chinese still emphasize the annihilation of the enemy's forces in the field as the basic military objective.²³ However, this concept may change as the CPR's long-range military striking power increases.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that Communist China's defense doctrine is based on the premise that in case of war either the US would be forced to undertake a major invasion and occupation of China or Communist China could not be defeated. If the US refused massively to invade China, Peking maintains that, despite nuclear strikes, the communist regime could survive and rule a damaged but still viable China. Yet China's dominant leaders also claim and may believe that if US forces did invade China, they would be bogged down and finally defeated by a protracted defense in depth.*

China's defense doctrine has no direct bearing on the crucial policy question regarding possible military intervention by Communist China in the war in Vietnam. However, the defense doctrine does provide an authoritative view of the policies, strategy, and tactics that the Chinese leadership would seek to employ if Communist China became involved in the war and the mainland was attacked by the US.

* The lack of an explicit offensive conventional warfare doctrine in published Chinese sources may be explained by its conflict with stated Maoist ideological and foreign policy goals. This omission may well be merely a matter of public acknowledgment.

MAOIST DOCTRINE FOR REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE

In the 19th century the Western powers conquered most of Asia and Africa and then maintained colonial rule, all with surprisingly small military forces. This was possible because of the superior weapons, organization, and logistics of the Western powers, but it was also due to the fact that most of the peoples of Asia and Africa were not politically motivated or organized to present a united front. Also their troops bravely, but not wisely, attempted to fight technically superior forces on the latter's terms.²⁴ By the middle of the 20th century the unifying force of nationalism and the effectiveness of anticolonial guerrilla warfare combined with the growing revulsion against imperialism in the West rapidly to free most of the colonial areas. Furthermore, by the second quarter of the 20th century, revolutionary leaders, both communist and non-communist, had formulated policies, techniques, and tactics that would permit politically organized but still militarily inferior forces effectively to challenge and sometimes actually to defeat better armed forces. In other words, these revolutionary leaders developed an effective doctrine for revolutionary warfare. Mao Tse-tung, the Chinese Communist leader, made a major contribution to the development of this revolutionary program.

Actually there is little in the principles, strategy, or tactics of Maoist military doctrine that is original. Mao was deeply influenced by the heroic literature and the military classics of China's past. He is also indebted to the Marxist-Leninist military tradition and especially to the writings of Lenin. Yet Mao's military concepts were also heavily influenced by the long military experience of his own Communist Party. Probably Mao's greatest contribution has been an eclectic development of a systematic and comprehensive doctrine of protracted insurrectionary warfare that can be used with considerable effectiveness against a colonial power, a foreign invader, or an independent national government.

Although Mao Tse-tung's major military works were written in the 1930's or 1940's, his supporters claim that Mao's military concepts are "scientific," timeless, and broadly applicable. Actually, recent editions of Mao's works have been subjected to some rewriting to give them a greater appearance of infallibility, to make them accord with the current party line, or to make them more applicable to the present world situation.²⁵ Nevertheless most of Mao's principal military and politico-military concepts have remained essentially unchanged during the last thirty years.

There has been a great resurgence of the study of the military thought of Mao in China since 1958.²⁶ This corresponded in time with the fanatical Great

Leap Forward and with a shift in foreign policy from the relatively "soft" line of the Bandung spirit to a more militant line. Since then the Chinese Communist Party has widely proclaimed and promulgated Maoist doctrine not only in China but also throughout the underdeveloped areas of the world. Mao's broadly distributed writings are meant to serve as textbooks for revolutionaries.²⁷ Peking claims that, when flexibly applied, the "thought of Mao Tse-tung" serves as an appropriate model for revolutions, that is, "wars of liberation" or "people's wars," in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It is maintained that this doctrine has been appropriate in the past, is at present, and will continue to be in the future.²⁸ The official People's Daily has actually stated that the enemy is the best teacher in revolutionary warfare and that even the military thought of Mao should be flexibly applied; nevertheless Chinese articles furnish revolutionaries with large amounts of Maoist advice regarding strategy and tactics.²⁹

It has been stated that Mao's military thinking is "more a question of foreign policy than of military strategy." Actually all military doctrine has implications for foreign policy, since it is designed to achieve national objectives by the use or threat of force. As Clausewitz, Lenin, and Mao have indicated, warfare is a form of foreign policy. Furthermore the wide dissemination of Maoist insurrectionary doctrine and the promotion of "people's wars" abroad still constitute one of the principal means by which Communist China seeks to export her influence. To Peking the promotion of revolutions is an important "weapons system." This is the case because Communist China does not yet possess an effective nuclear capability and because her massive conventional forces still have only relatively limited strategic mobility abroad. Furthermore the promotion and support of foreign revolutions is much less dangerous to semideveloped China than are overt wars of aggression across her frontiers.

Nevertheless, in discussing Maoist doctrine for revolutionary warfare, it is necessary strongly to emphasize the point that military operations are only one element in the overall Chinese revolutionary doctrine. The total doctrine consists of closely coordinated political, economic, and psychological factors, as well as military strategy, tactics, and techniques; that is, the doctrine combines "armed struggle" with "other forms of struggle."³⁰ However, the military aspects of Maoist revolutionary doctrine have often been underestimated, but this has not been done by the communists themselves. Mao's maxim that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun"³¹ is well known, but Chinese leaders have also continued to repeat Mao's statement that in a revolution "the main form of struggle is war and the main form of organization is the army."³² The concept has been even more forcefully stated by the acting chief of the General Staff Department:

Armed struggle is the most decisive of all forms of struggles. Without a successful armed struggle it is impossible to carry on other forms of struggle successfully. The latter are the supports of armed struggle. Closely co-ordinated with armed struggle, they contribute to victory.³³

Mao and his lieutenants have long maintained that there are four basic elements necessary for victory in a "people's war."³⁴ The first is the

organization of a Leninist party; by a Leninist party the communists mean a highly organized, indoctrinated, and disciplined party of revolutionaries who demand the leading role in the revolution. The second essential element of success is mass support and a united front. Mass support is meant to come primarily from the poorer peasants; the peasants are to be won over by promises and material incentives. The doctrine also calls for winning over or at least neutralizing other important but smaller classes or groups, whose support is to be sought through united fronts and appeals tailored to each group. Multiclass alliances or united fronts play a key role in the Chinese prototype for revolution. A third basic element for victory is a Party army. The army is organized by the Party; it must be loyal to the Party, willing to fight its countrymen in a civil war, and professionally capable of ultimately winning for the Party. The final essential element is the creation of rural revolutionary base areas or strategic bases of operations. The bases should be sufficiently self-supporting to maintain the local population and to support the Party and the Party army. They should be "safe havens." Ideally bases should be in rough areas with poor communications; frequently they are in isolated border regions between jurisdictions. They should provide cover and concealment. It is highly preferable that one border of a base abut on a communist state, which can then serve as a source of supply and as a sanctuary. These rural revolutionary bases are employed to encircle and ultimately capture strongly held cities.²³

The basic objective of Mao's military doctrine—i.e., the doctrine of people's war—is the seizure and maintenance of political power. However, in recent years a further major aim has been to oppose, to overextend, and to weaken the US and its allies. Thus it is maintained that "people's war" is the most effective weapon against "US imperialism and its lackeys,"²⁴ and the conflict in Vietnam has been proclaimed to be both the "focus" of the "anti-imperialist struggle" and "a testing ground" for American suppression of "people's wars."²⁵ It is claimed that the "victories of the Vietnamese people have greatly enhanced the fighting will of all the revolutionary people of the world, and seriously punctured the arrogance of the US imperialist paper tiger."²⁶

The purpose of Mao's military thinking is to provide the doctrine, strategy, tactics, and techniques necessary to permit originally inferior forces to expand and ultimately to defeat larger and better-equipped military forces.²⁷ The doctrine calls for an agrarian revolution led and dominated by a Chinese-type communist party. In this revolution the peasantry provide the "main force," comprising the bulk of the troops and serving as a principal source of supplies, security, and intelligence. This is no longer a Marxian proletarian revolution; it is a communist-led peasant insurrection.

Maoist doctrine of revolutionary conflict is based on the concept of a protracted war: a war of attrition and annihilation.²⁸ Originally the doctrine called for the protracted war to proceed through three distinct stages. The concept was developed during the early years of the Sino-Japanese War. It was maintained that the conflict would begin with a period of strategic defense and retreat. This would be followed by a long period of stalemate during which the Chinese would build up their forces. Finally a strategic counteroffensive would achieve a Chinese victory. However, the three-stage nature of the protracted war is now being deemphasized because the concept is not applicable

to all revolutionary situations."¹ Certainly the war against Japan never progressed through the originally prescribed three stages, despite Peking's re-writing of history. By the end of WWII the communist military forces had rapidly expanded to a point where the successful revolution against the Nationalist Government never really had a first stage. In Cuba, Castro's revolt never had to go beyond the first stage. Ho Chi Minh's insurrection against the French in Vietnam and the Algerian war—in which both sides were influenced by Maoist doctrine—ended with what were basically political rather than truly military victories. The French people lost the will to fight a protracted and unpopular war. These cases were more a vindication of Mao's concept of the importance of propaganda, psychological warfare, and patience than of his "scientific" analysis of the "laws" of military conflict. Since Mao is being deified, no major element of his "glorious" military thought can be publicly abrogated in China, at least not while Mao is alive. Furthermore, sometime in the future a revolution might proceed through all three stages of a protracted war, thus vindicating another Maoist concept. Hence the conception of a three-stage war is maintained, but deemphasized.

Mao's doctrine of "people's war" continues to emphasize the political mobilization and indoctrination of the people as a basis for military mobilization; time is utilized to mobilize the people and to build up revolutionary armed forces. Mao Tse-tung has long exhibited an almost mystical faith in the capabilities of the masses, if they can only be thoroughly indoctrinated and motivated. Mao apparently believes that then the masses become an "impregnable bastion" and a force capable of achieving physical miracles. Thus great stress is placed on human will. Space—the utilization of a vast area—which originally played a major role in the doctrine, has been deemphasized because it is now maintained that victorious guerrilla wars can be fought in small countries which do not have the vast terrain of China: Cuba, Vietnam, and Algeria are presented as examples. This is one case in which Peking has admitted that an important element of Maoist military doctrine has been revised. Since the revision is considered to be advantageous to Communist China, the change is explained at length as being made possible by "favorable" shifts in the world situation.²

The Chinese doctrine for revolutionary warfare calls for tactical offensives even in a period of strategic defense; it requires absolute local superiority of forces, despite an overall inferiority of forces; it calls for battles of quick decision in a protracted war; it demands maneuverability and a rapid concentration and dispersal of forces. Major tactics were long ago sloganized by Mao Tse-tung as follows: "The enemy advances, we retreat. The enemy halts, we harass. The enemy tires, we attack. The enemy retreats, we pursue." Stress is placed on deception, ruses, and ambushes. There is nothing essentially new in any of these tactics, but they do constitute sound guerrilla and insurrectionary techniques. Their adoption by dissident elements in developing nations to overthrow established governments presents new challenges.

Maoist doctrine requires that every effort be made to develop an effective grass-roots intelligence network based on sympathetic peasants and urban supporters. It is considered equally important to blind the enemy commanders by denying them intelligence. Attempts to deny information to the enemy are based on both persuasion and terror. The political nature of insurrectionary

warfare, as well as its military requirements, led Mao Tse-tung to place great emphasis on winning the active support of the local populace. Hence stress is placed on the use of persuasion and indoctrination, but if persuasion fails, coercion is employed to achieve acquiescence.

In an effort to nullify the enemy's superiority in weapons and fully employ the human factor, greater emphasis is now being placed on close combat and night fighting than in the past. It is said that "people's armed forces" excel at fighting "a battle of quick decision, at close range, at night, and in hand-to-hand combat."⁴³ Despite the disparagement of atomic weapons, more stress is now being placed on the concept that although the enemy must be despised strategically, he must also be respected tactically: if the enemy is not despised strategically, or over the long run, then the revolutionaries will be afraid to fight him; but if the enemy is not respected tactically, or in the short run, his superior military forces may crush the revolutionaries. Thus it is held that strategically the enemy is a "paper tiger," but tactically he is an "iron tiger."⁴⁴ The slogan "paper tiger" is closely related to the military concept of strategically pitting one against ten, but tactically pitting ten against one. Actually, in every battle superior forces must be launched against the enemy in a ratio of between two and six to one.⁴⁵ The objective of concentrating superior forces is to destroy enemy troops one by one in a protracted war of annihilation. It is said that "injuring all of our enemy's ten fingers is not as effective as chopping off one" and that "a war of annihilation depresses and demoralizes the enemy."⁴⁶ However, to preserve and increase one's own strength it is necessary to avoid combat unless victory is almost totally ensured. Mao Tse-tung has expressed the concept thus: "You fight in your way and we fight in ours; we fight when we can win and move away when we can't."⁴⁷

One unique feature of this doctrine is that it maintains the enemy is the revolutionary's best quartermaster; that is, the enemy's arsenals and especially his front-line troops are meant to be a source of military supplies. The revolutionary is encouraged to improve his equipment by seizing modern arms from the enemy.⁴⁸ It is also held that retreat is no disgrace, as long as the objective is to live to fight again under more favorable conditions. Bravery and self-sacrifice are essential, but bravado is a sin. A non-Western element of this doctrine is the stress that is placed on patience. It is assumed that the indoctrinated and disciplined revolutionary forces will have greater patience, a greater willingness to fight a protracted war, than will their "decadent" enemies.

Since Mao Tse-tung is a recognized authority on guerrilla warfare, some believe that the type of war which he advocates consists almost solely of guerrilla warfare. Actually his doctrine also calls for conventional mobile war, even positional war, depending on the stage or the phase of the war. Formerly mobile warfare was given the greatest emphasis and it was maintained that ultimate victory could be won only by regular forces fighting a fluid mobile war. However, in recent years stress has again been placed on widespread guerrilla warfare. Apparently it is now believed that in some cases a protracted guerrilla conflict alone can win an insurrectionary war, or at least create a long and costly war that could help to overextend the US and create increasing domestic opposition in the US that would force a withdrawal. Sometimes Chinese Communist sources now use "guerrilla war" and "people's war" interchangeably, especially when discussing tactics.⁴⁹

In recent years there have been two very important modifications of Maoist military doctrine, or the doctrine of "people's war." First, the concept of using rural revolutionary bases to encircle and finally capture cities has been extended to a global scale. It is maintained that the underdeveloped nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America can replace the guerrilla bases and "liberated areas" of wartime China as strategic rural bases, while urbanized North America and Western Europe can be substituted for the cities of Peking and Shanghai in an "inevitably victorious" people's war. Even noncommunist revolutions are considered to be advantageous in advancing this goal if they embarrass or help to overextend the US and its allies.⁵⁰

The global extension of the encirclement strategy has been developing over several years and is related to Peking's policy of attempting to create a worldwide anti-US united front. Actually both the encirclement concept and the global united front are Chinese Communist contributions to the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of world revolution. They are important elements of a Maoist blueprint for the implementation of the original Marxian concept of the ultimate triumph of world communism. Like the Marxist vision of communism triumphant, the Maoist blueprint represents an ultimate goal, with no time limit. It is Utopian. Yet it is also meant to have revolutionary short- and mid-range implications. One obvious aim is the progressive establishment of communist regimes that would be favorable to Peking in the Sino-Soviet conflict. Another major objective is an attempt to overextend and weaken the US by confronting it with multiple, concurrent, hostile insurrections.⁵¹ The realities of the world situation and internal conditions in China are such that the odds against the achievement of Peking's objectives are very high, but the Chinese are patient.

Second, Peking has further developed a doctrinal rationalization to justify Communist China's failure to intervene directly to support "people's wars," for example in Vietnam. The revolutionaries of the world are promised aid, support, and "spiritual atomic bombs," but the Chinese do not promise to send their own armies to support communist revolutions abroad, for it is maintained that "people's wars" or insurrections must be won primarily by the people of the countries concerned. Friendly foreign aid can be valuable, but it is held that even a socialist, that is, a communist, state cannot actually win a revolution for a foreign people.⁵²

In fact, Communist China has never become overtly and massively involved in any "war of liberation" or "people's war." It has not served Peking's national or ideological interests to intervene openly in insurrections, for to do so could mean a direct confrontation with the US. (Peking called the Korean War an "imperialist war of aggression" rather than a "war of liberation.") Furthermore the war in Korea appeared increasingly to threaten China's borders.) Nevertheless Red China has encouraged foreign "wars of liberation" and has provided revolutionary doctrine, training, and limited arms support to a number of revolutions. Also she has promised to increase her aid and support to all "people's wars" as China becomes stronger. But for Communist China openly to intervene, for example in Vietnam, would seriously weaken her claim that "people's wars" can be won independently by revolutionaries, even in distant states where Peking could not render major military support. If Chinese armies became involved in South Vietnam, that war would no longer serve as a "shining example" of a successful "do-it-yourself" revolution;

more important, China would then be engaged in an open conflict with the US. Nevertheless Peking's doctrinal rationalization for not openly intervening to support revolutions should not be interpreted as indicating that Communist China would not fight to defend her own vital interests, nor does it modify her views regarding hostile actions that appear to threaten the existence of a traditional buffer state, endanger a neighboring communist regime, or threaten China's own frontiers. In the Korean War Communist China intervened when UN troops approached her Manchurian borders, for the UN advance appeared to endanger the security interests of the Chinese Communist regime while also threatening to crush the communist government of North Korea.⁵³

Finally, there is a strong psychological and propaganda element in Maoist insurrectionary doctrine. An attempt to maintain morale and the will to fight has always been a major consideration. Revolutionaries are assured that the growth of insurrectionary forces from weak to strong is a "universal law" and that the ultimate victory of a people's war is "inevitable." It is claimed that the weak "always" defeat the powerful and it is said to be a "universal truth" that primitive weapons "can prevail over modern arms."⁵⁴ In recent years a basic objective behind many of the numerous articles on insurrectionary doctrine has been to convince potential revolutionaries that they should "dare to fight," dare to engage in armed revolution.⁵⁵ However, the arguments used are deceptive. For example, the US, nuclear weapons, sea power, and air power are all referred to as "paper tigers."⁵⁶ It is claimed that the revolutionary tide is rising, that imperialism is decaying, and that the US is suffering one defeat after another.⁵⁷ It is evident that all of these statements are utilized in an attempt to bolster the morale of revolutionaries and to encourage them to engage in or to continue armed struggle. Still it seems fair to say that the Chinese Communists have been more willing to urge foreign revolutionaries to revolt against superior forces than they have been to intervene directly in major conflicts that could endanger the security of their own regime.

In conclusion it should be noted that the dominant Chinese Communist leaders claim and apparently believe that the Maoist doctrine of protracted insurrectionary warfare provides an effective model for revolutions in all of the underdeveloped areas of the world. Also the promotion of "people's war" constitutes a principal means by which Peking seeks to extend its influence abroad and to achieve world power status. Furthermore Peking's leaders claim that "people's wars" are the "best weapon" against US power and they strive to confront the US with multiple concurrent revolts and revolutions. Yet, under present conditions, they themselves seek to avoid a direct military confrontation with the US.

The Maoist doctrine of revolutionary warfare advocates military prudence, and the Chinese have presented an ideological rationalization for not intervening massively to support "wars of liberation." These concepts will not be major factors in determining the crucial question of whether or not Communist China will intervene militarily in Vietnam. However, they are considerations that weigh on the side of Chinese nonintervention. More directly, Mao's doctrine of insurrectionary warfare provides a broad blueprint of the type of war that Peking's leaders believe should be fought in South Vietnam by the Viet Cong and the Hanoi regime.

THE EMERGING NUCLEAR DOCTRINE

Communist China has so far presented only a partially developed nuclear doctrine and Peking may not publish a full-fledged doctrine on nuclear warfare until after she has actually developed an effective atomic capability. Nevertheless the Chinese have studied foreign military treatises and in due course they will almost certainly publish a "Chinese" nuclear doctrine. At present it can only be said that Peking has issued scattered statements regarding nuclear weapons and warfare. Many of these comments are propagandistic and some are contradictory. Obviously many statements have been issued for political or psychological reasons rather than to clarify the views of the Chinese leaders regarding nuclear war.

It is interesting to note that for a year after they began their atomic testing in October 1964 the Chinese Communists actually published less regarding nuclear doctrine and their own development of atomic weapons than they had previously. After the first two atomic tests, Communist China and her friends around the world launched large-scale but relatively short-lived propaganda campaigns. These sought to exploit the tests for prestige purposes, but they also had such disparate aims as attempting to placate world public opinion while utilizing the nuclear tests to increase the morale and militancy of revolutionaries in the underdeveloped areas.¹⁸ Nevertheless during 1965 the Chinese leaders engaged in less foreign and domestic exploitation of their technological achievements in the atomic field than foreign specialists had expected. Meanwhile increasing emphasis was placed on the revolutionary military concepts of Mao Tse-tung, and especially on his doctrine of "people's war," as both an offensive and a defensive system.

It is judged that Peking's failure to give greater publicity to nuclear developments during late 1964 and 1965 was motivated in part by the dominance of Maoist doctrine, including the concept of the superiority of men over any weapons, including nuclear weapons. However, given the hostile policy of Communist China toward both the US and the USSR, perhaps a more important reason for Peking's reticence was the fear that continuous publicity regarding the development of a capability to endanger the superpowers might encourage preemptive strikes to destroy China's budding nuclear capability. During 1966 Peking carried out three sophisticated atomic tests, which indicated rapid progress toward the development of a real nuclear capability. These successes did not, however, result in markedly increased external propaganda exploitation of China's achievements. Apparently the restricting factors noted above were still having some effect. Nevertheless atomic progress was given much greater internal publicity. The tests have been exploited to glorify the image

of Mao Tse-tung and to further strengthen the political position of Mao and "Marshal" Lin Piao in the great power struggle and policy conflict known as the "cultural revolution."⁶⁰

Since China is still only semimodernized, the very rapid progress that the Chinese have made in developing a nuclear capability indicates that the regime has placed the very highest priority on the development of an effective nuclear weapons system. Scarce resources and technical personnel have been allotted to advanced weapons programs. The Chinese leaders appear so anxious to develop a nuclear capability that there is apparently some validity in the report that the Chinese foreign minister once stated that Communist China would manufacture atomic weapons even if it meant there was "no money to make trousers."⁶¹

Peking officially claims that China was forced to develop nuclear weapons owing to the "increasing nuclear threat posed by the United States" and in order "to oppose the US-Soviet collusion for maintaining nuclear monopoly and sabotaging the revolutionary struggle of all oppressed peoples." The leaders seek to strengthen and modernize China's national defenses, and it is claimed that nuclear weapons are being developed "solely for defensive purposes." The ultimate aim, it is said, is to abolish all nuclear weapons and to promote "world peace."⁶² However, by their definition world peace can be achieved only by the destruction of capitalism and the worldwide victory of communism.⁶³

The official Chinese policy still depreciates the power of nuclear weapons.⁶⁴ Again this may be due in part to the stultifying effects of Maoist doctrine, but the principal reason appears to be psychological. For years the Chinese leaders have sought to decrease the fear and improve the morale of the Chinese people and armed forces regarding the possibility of a nuclear war with the US.⁶⁵ Considering the thermonuclear arsenal of the US and China's current lack of a real nuclear deterrent, for Peking to emphasize the terrible effects of nuclear weapons would still be counterproductive.

Yet, despite Soviet charges to the contrary, the leaders of Communist China do not fundamentally underestimate the terrible power of nuclear weapons. They do not seek to instigate a thermonuclear holocaust and it is not even accurate to say that they consider a nuclear war to be inevitable.⁶⁶ Over the years the Chinese Communist view has shifted somewhat.⁶⁷ Recently the Chinese leaders have expressed the "sincere hope" that nuclear war can be avoided and are "convinced" that it can be if all "peace-loving" countries and people "persevere in the struggle."⁶⁸ Although Peking maintains that its atomic-weapons program makes a major "contribution" to "world peace," it sounds less peaceful for the Chinese Communists to claim repeatedly that their nuclear-weapons program is a "great encouragement" to all of the revolutionary peoples of the world in their struggles.⁶⁹

The Chinese leaders have claimed that they do not underestimate the terrible effect of nuclear weapons. They have admitted that atomic weapons create a qualitative leap in military technology and that such arms will have a tremendous effect both militarily and politically. It is recognized that such weapons will have a deep influence on the strategy, tactics, and organization for war.⁷⁰ Nevertheless Peking continues to disparage nuclear weapons, and it is claimed that such modern weapons cannot change the nature of war. Mao Tse-tung is again quoted as saying that the "atom bomb is a paper tiger" and

that although it is a "weapon of mass slaughter," still "the outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by one or two new types of weapon."⁷⁰ "The destiny of China is decided by the people of China, the destiny of the world is decided by the people of the world, not by nuclear weapons."⁷¹ It is also claimed that "the moral atom bomb of the revolutionary people is hundreds of thousands of times more powerful than the material atom bomb."⁷² Thus it is said that China, unlike her enemies, has both material and moral nuclear weapons. The moral atomic bomb will, it is claimed, actually grow in strength during the course of a war.⁷³ Furthermore it is said that the thought of Mao is an even better weapon than the atomic bomb.⁷⁴ The Chinese leaders oppose the concept that "weapons decide everything" and proclaim that they have "no blind faith in the atomic bomb."⁷⁵ It is held that nuclear weapons "cannot replace conventional weapons, still less replace ground forces in decisive engagements."⁷⁶ Hence it is maintained that China "must master both conventional and nuclear weapons."⁷⁷

In the past Mao Tse-tung said that a thermonuclear holocaust might kill as much as half the population of the world;⁷⁸ yet it is maintained that to say that thermonuclear war would destroy mankind is "absurd."⁷⁹ It has been held that should the "imperialists" impose such a war, "the victorious people would very swiftly create on the ruins of imperialism a civilization thousands of times higher than the capitalist system and a truly beautiful future for themselves."⁸⁰ More recently the powerful Minister of Defense, Lin Piao, has repeated the statement that if the US should launch World War III, "many more hundreds of millions of people will turn to socialism; . . . and it is possible that the whole structure of imperialism will collapse."⁸¹ Such statements are propagandistic and have psychological objectives. They do not indicate that Communist China is desirous of starting a thermonuclear war. However, they do indicate that the Maoist leadership refuses to admit that such a holocaust could destroy communist as well as capitalist societies. Peking maintains that China cannot be defeated by a nuclear attack and that the Chinese people are not intimidated by "atomic blackmail." They are encouraged not to fear war or nuclear weapons, and it is claimed that the Chinese people, armed with the thought of Mao, are not afraid of war.⁸² Peking maintains that China's atomic tests have proved "again and again" that it is entirely possible to build a defense against nuclear weapons if great care is taken.⁸³ It is also noted that the US itself is threatened by nuclear weapons⁸⁴ and thus has practical inhibitions against using its nuclear arsenal.

It is known that for years the Chinese have carried out some military planning regarding the use of nuclear weapons. The now declassified Bulletin of Activities papers indicate that the Chinese Communist leaders plan ultimately to equip their forces with nuclear weapons and that some preliminary training in the offensive and defensive use of atomic weapons was being carried out as early as 1961. Units of regimental level and above were instructed to study the offensive capabilities of nuclear weapons, while battalions and lower units were directed to emphasize defense against atomic attacks. The Academy of Military Science was directed to make a theoretical study of problems involved in preventing sudden attacks and in defending cities and islands. Defense planning envisages long-range nuclear strikes.⁸⁵ In this regard Peking holds that the stationing of Polaris submarines in Far Eastern waters constitutes

a threat to China.⁶⁸ Yet China's own nuclear testing program, especially the fourth test in October 1966, demonstrates that Peking plans to develop a long-range nuclear missile capability of its own.

Communist China's rather limited published expressions regarding the utilization of nuclear weapons contain an element of prudence as well as an element of propaganda. Some statements seek to portray the communist regime as a mature government that can be trusted to act rationally. This effort at image-building probably involves a deliberate attempt to prevent a preemptive attack on China's budding nuclear facilities. Every press communique announcing a Chinese atomic weapon test has "solemnly" declared that at no time and under no circumstances would China be the first to employ nuclear weapons.⁶⁹ Peking has also repeatedly claimed that her testing program will be "limited."⁷⁰ Furthermore it is maintained that the foreign policy of Communist China does not depend on whether or not China has nuclear weapons.⁷¹ The Premier has alleged that China will never utilize its nuclear arms to blackmail other states.⁷² Also the Foreign Minister has stated that although China is prepared to render assistance in developing the peaceful uses of atomic energy, the question of China's helping foreign countries to develop atomic weapons is "not realistic."⁷³

It is important to note that the Chinese have doubts that atomic weapons will again be used in warfare. They claim that nuclear weapons cannot be used in revolutionary wars—that is, "people's wars" or "wars of liberation." Furthermore they maintain that atomic weapons cannot be "lightly" used in any warfare.⁷⁴ In fact, Mao Tse-tung has been quoted as saying that "probably no nation dared employ them."⁷⁵ Despite repeated propagandistic claims that the US is preparing for an atomic attack on China, the Chinese Communists obviously place considerable confidence in the deterrent effect of world public opinion on the wartime use of nuclear weapons. In the case of revolutionary wars it is maintained, with considerable logic, that public opinion, the opposition of our allies, the absence of appropriate targets, the intermingling of battle lines, and the fear of retaliation prevent the use of atomic weapons. It is stated that despite its nuclear arsenal the US has not been able to prevent victorious revolutions in China, Korea, Cuba, and elsewhere. Hence, since the US cannot employ its nuclear weapons they remain "paper tigers."⁷⁶ Nevertheless Peking has placed the highest priority on her own development of a nuclear capability.⁷⁷

Regarding the question of nuclear disarmament or proliferation, the official Chinese policy is self-serving and often vitriolic. The official line calls for "completely prohibiting and thoroughly destroying nuclear weapons."⁷⁸ Yet since Communist China began her own nuclear testing in October 1964, her disarmament proposals have been greatly reduced in scope. Several times Peking has called for a worldwide summit conference to discuss the problem of the prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons. The suggested first step

*Although no explicit nuclear doctrine appears to have been developed owing to its likely conflict with Mao's revolutionary concepts, we may assume an implicit body of thought within the military establishment. However, caution should be exercised in such inferences since we know from the period of suppression of doctrinal thinking in the Soviet military under Stalin that thought was not only suppressed but stultified in the development.

toward disarmament calls for an agreement not to use atomic weapons against nonnuclear states, nuclear-free zones, or against other nuclear powers.⁶⁹ This proposal is meant to sound "fair and reasonable." Yet it neglects most of the major issues that have handicapped disarmament negotiations in the past, and it even fails to mention several important points that were advocated in the earlier statement by which Peking refused to sign the limited test-ban treaty in 1963. The proposal issued after nuclear testing began in October 1964 fails to mention general disarmament and omits the earlier suggestion to prohibit importing, exporting, manufacturing or stockpiling nuclear arms, although a proposed ban on manufacturing and stockpiling was revived later.⁷⁰ Still the Chinese proposal no longer contains a call for the destruction of nuclear-weapons delivery systems or for abolishing installations involved in the "research, testing and manufacture of atomic weapons." Earlier recommendations to cease all nuclear testing and to create nuclear-free zones were also dropped. Neither the 1963 nor 1964 proposals have any provisions regarding the crucial issues of control and inspection. Both plans ignore the major question of conventional disarmament.⁷¹ In fact general disarmament has been derided as a "smokescreen" and an "illusion."⁷² Furthermore China now adopts a hard line regarding disarmament negotiations. Peking is opposed to being "dragged" into disarmament conferences that are under UN auspices or under "US-Soviet collaboration."⁷³ Recently it has been officially stated that China will not attend any world disarmament conference.⁷⁴

Communist China has continued to be violently opposed to the partial test-ban treaty of 1963, which Peking has referred to as a "fraud," a "trap," and a "criminal concoction." It has been maintained that the treaty was aimed at China and that a basic objective was an attempt to prevent Peking from developing atomic weapons.⁷⁵ Official policy is also bitterly opposed to the signing of a treaty on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, which Peking claims would be a "big swindle" and a "criminal plot." The Chinese leaders argue that nonproliferation "simply means that only the United States and the Soviet Union are allowed to possess and develop nuclear weapons" while other nations are deprived of the right to build nuclear arms for "self-defense."⁷⁶ It is alleged that the leaders of the US and the USSR are seeking "world domination" and "actively plotting" to "consolidate their position of nuclear monopoly."⁷⁷ Peking claims that China suffers from the nuclear threats and blackmail of the superpowers, which are involved in a "monstrous conspiracy against China" and seek to limit her influence.⁷⁸

Apparently the Chinese Communists do not seriously fear nuclear proliferation or at least they consider it to be a lesser of evils and an issue to be used for propaganda purposes. The Chinese continue to maintain that the possession of atomic weapons by "imperialist" states is an evil, but they have long held that the spread of nuclear weapons to "socialist" countries is "good," beneficial to "peace" and necessary for self-defense.⁷⁹ Both before China began nuclear testing and again recently Peking has claimed that it is advantageous for more countries to possess atomic weapons.⁸⁰ It is unconvincingly argued that nuclear weapons can be prohibited and nuclear war prevented only when "more or all countries" have nuclear weapons and the "nuclear monopoly" of the superpowers is "completely broken."⁸¹ Thus the Chinese seek to rationalize their support for both nuclear proliferation and complete nuclear disarmament. Perhaps the Chinese leaders manipulate the proliferation issue

only for political reasons. Yet they may believe that the US and the USSR would agree to abolish nuclear weapons only if extensive proliferation led to a terribly unstable and dangerous international situation.

Semideveloped Communist China is not yet a full-fledged nuclear power and she cannot fully compete in the nuclear field with the US or the USSR. Yet China has massive conventional forces and an inexhaustible supply of manpower. Hence in terms of their own interests it is not surprising that the Chinese leaders have opposed conventional disarmament and the test-ban treaty, while advocating both proliferation and the total abolition of nuclear weapons. Obviously nuclear disarmament without conventional disarmament would still be highly advantageous to China, for it would preserve Communist China's massive conventional forces intact while destroying any nuclear deterrent to their use.

In conclusion it should be noted that despite their propaganda regarding atomic "paper tigers," the dominant leaders of Communist China do not fundamentally underestimate the terrible effects of nuclear weapons, nor do they rashly seek to create a thermonuclear war. The Chinese appear convinced that atomic weapons will not be used in insurrectionary wars, for example in Vietnam. But their nuclear concepts and their defense doctrine indicate that they are worried that nuclear weapons would be employed against China if they intervened militarily in the war in Vietnam. This is another factor weighing against China's military intervention in the Vietnamese war.

CONTINUING VALIDITY OF THE DOCTRINES

The contemporary military doctrines of Communist China are Maoist and are influenced by the long military experience of the aging communist leaders. This is especially true of the revolutionary and defense doctrines. Hence, insofar as Mao's military thought is passé and unrealistic in this thermonuclear era, Maoism is a stultifying factor. However, many of Mao's military concepts and principles are more realistic and have more continuing applicability than do many of his doctrinaire economic and social concepts. Mao's greatest claim to fame is as a militant revolutionary leader and military strategist. Despite a facade of dogmatic and politically motivated clichés, Communist China's military doctrines are essentially pragmatic and have been surprisingly well tailored to China's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as to the world situation that has confronted China.

The defense doctrine of Communist China is basically a rational, thought-out plan to provide the best available defense of a vast, multitudinous, semi-developed state—a state which does not yet possess an effective nuclear deterrent and which has potential enemies that maintain great nuclear arsenals. The doctrine is based on military necessity and pragmatically attempts to exploit time, space, manpower, and will, including will in the form of nationalism and patriotism. One objective is to seek to maintain the morale of the populace and the armed forces. A major objective is to convince powerful enemies that to defeat China would not be worth the cost. The serious deterioration of relations with a nuclear-armed USSR makes the present doctrine even more necessary. It will continue to be a pragmatic and essential doctrine until such time as Communist China develops a credible nuclear deterrent. Even then it would still continue to provide the plans for an impressive defense against a possible conventional invasion.

The military organization and force structure of Communist China are in large part based on the implementation of this defense doctrine. Policy calls for large but not unlimited standing forces, supported by a vast militia reserve corps. The regular forces now have a limited offensive capability, but they have a greater defensive ability. The massive militia is a gendarmerie and labor force in peacetime, but in case of war it is meant to serve as a vast localized defense force. Until Communist China basically changes its defense doctrine it can be expected to maintain essentially the same form of force structure.

Maoist doctrine for revolutionary warfare can be an effective and financially inexpensive policy tool for Communist China. The terrible costs involved in combating Maoist-type insurrections have been demonstrated in China, Malaya, the Philippines, Algeria, and Vietnam. Recently Peking has gotten

into trouble, especially in Africa, by the wholesale promotion of revolutions and by proclaiming continent-wide "revolutionary waves" that appeared to threaten all nationalistic governments. However, if Communist China should again adopt more diplomatic finesse and limit its targets to countries that are definitely pro-Western or anti-Peking, then Maoist revolutionary doctrine could again serve as an effective offensive weapons system. Peking maintains that any revolt—communist or noncommunist—that embarrasses or overextends the US is advantageous. Hence any civil war or insurrection that can be stirred up in this troubled world and that involves the US is considered by Peking to serve its interests.

A communist victory in Vietnam would increase the prestige and credibility of the Maoist insurrectionary doctrine, the doctrine of "people's wars," but even a major defeat would probably not discourage the Chinese Communists. Their revolutionary doctrine has experienced defeats, as well as victories, in the past. Victories are widely acclaimed, while defeats are rationalized.

Maoist doctrine for insurrectionary warfare represents a major Chinese contribution to Marxist-Leninist concepts of revolution. The promotion of revolution is not easy, but it is inexpensive, and twenty years of experience has demonstrated that the Chinese Communists are correct in maintaining that insurrections are not apt to escalate into world wars. Hence it is expected that as long as the Chinese mainland government is communist, Peking will continue to export its doctrine of revolutionary warfare and support "people's wars" or "wars of liberation," even after Mao passes from the scene.

Furthermore, despite its propagandistic and dogmatic aspects, the emerging nuclear doctrine is also rather well tailored to Communist China's internal conditions and international position. It encourages revolutions, yet contains an element of prudence regarding the actual use of nuclear weapons. It is so flexible and even contradictory that it can easily be modified to match China's growing nuclear capability. Yet some of its basic concepts would appear to be of continuing validity during the next decade. Given Communist China's determination to develop a nuclear capability, it will continue to serve Peking's interests to oppose international restrictions on atomic development programs, such as the test-ban and nonproliferation treaties. Yet, given the technological and weapons superiority of the US and the USSR, it will continue to serve China's interests to oppose thermonuclear wars and support pledges of "no first use" and campaigns to totally outlaw nuclear weapons. However, it would appear that it would also continue to serve Communist China's interests to use a growing nuclear capability for propaganda and blackmail purposes in an attempt to advance its foreign policy objectives.

Despite external factors, during the next decade Communist China's military doctrines and their effect on force levels and structures are apt to be influenced primarily by internal political and economic developments. Given the advanced age of the current leaders, during the next decade there may be three crises of leadership in China: the present power struggle, purge, and policy conflict, known as the "cultural revolution"; a succession struggle following the passing of Mao; and another conflict following the death of his successors. This political instability must have some, and perhaps serious, detrimental effects on economic progress. This to an unknown degree will slow down the development of a nuclear capability, of advanced conventional weapons, and of strategic communications, despite the high priorities given to them.

Until Communist China can develop a credible nuclear deterrent and/or provide its conventional forces with very modern weapons systems and great strategic mobility, it is apt to preserve its military doctrines and force structures largely unchanged, even though much of the florid language of Maoism may disappear after his death.

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13. ABSTRACT <p>This study provides a compact, documented presentation and analysis of the principal military doctrines of Communist China, i.e., those on Chinese national defense, revolutionary warfare, and nuclear war, the first two of which have been strongly influenced by Mao. These have been spelled out in detail by official Chinese publications and are based on many years of Chinese Communist military experience. They are authoritative. Peking has not yet produced a full-fledged nuclear doctrine, but it has issued significant statements regarding nuclear weapons and nuclear war. Despite her ambitions, Peking has not published a doctrine regarding conventional warfare beyond her frontiers, for to do so would contradict her claim that by definition a Communist state cannot engage in aggressive wars.</p>		

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